

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Xóchitl Arellano 916.956.0320 or Xóchitl.arellano@sen.ca.gov

May 18, 2007

The California Latino Legislative Caucus Welcomes Governor's Engaged Immigration Debate, Urges Broad Discussion

Sacramento- The California Latino Legislative Caucus applauds Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's engagement in the immigration discussion amid the pending decisions in Congress on the matter. The Latino Caucus urges the governor to have a broader discussion on a comprehensive immigration reform.

We also applaud the Speaker's sentiments – we agree on a real comprehensive immigration.

As members of a Caucus that represents such diverse regions as, Santa Ana, San Jose, San Diego, Fresno and Los Angeles, the Caucus understands the sometimes conflicting perspectives on the topic of immigration. While the governor's focus rightly includes national security and economic growth the Latino Caucus would also urge that the topics of human dignity and social contribution remain a part of the immigration dialogue. Immigrants have carried the burden of the hardest, most dangerous, and most underpaid labor in our state. A comprehensive immigration reform must respect workers and can not separate families.

Immigration policy is about human beings and integral to that discussion is the consideration of human and civil rights. Our policies should be a balanced perspective of human rights, economic considerations and national security.

People want leadership on the issue, they want to know our borders will be safe, jobs will be plentiful, and that social programs will not be overwhelmed. Many times elected officials create fear and uncertainty, with proposals that are one sided and misinform the public rather than addressing all the issues. We need to take a look at the facts and work toward real solutions that reflect all stakeholders-workers, families, business, rule of law and community.

The Latino Caucus supports the Governor's stronger stance on the contributions of immigrants in our state and nation. The Caucus urges Governor Schwarzenegger to vocally support the Federal Dream Act and sign into law:

- SB60 (Cedillo) Would enable undocumented immigrants to apply for a driving only license with stringent security measures that meet or exceed Federal Real ID security requirements

- AB 976 (Calderon) Which prohibits cities and counties from enacting laws that will require landlords to enforce a law to determine any persons citizenship or immigration status.
- SB 382 (Oropeza) Would allow newly sworn citizens to register and vote up until the close of polls on Election Day.
- SB 1 (Cedillo) Office of Immigrant Affairs
- SB 160 (Cedillo), The California Dream Act that would allow all California graduates equally compete for institutional and CalGrant financial aid.

The federal government needs to take swift action to achieve a fair and humanitarian comprehensive immigration reform.

California has the capacity to do something now for its citizens. Prepare the state for an office of immigrant affairs. Both the Governor and the Speaker have a real opportunity to work in collaboration to sing these bills here in the state. California and America “at our best” should not be about scarcity or denying a segment of society basic rights or opportunities for advancement. Our strongest and most admired characteristic has been abundance – individual prosperity, freedom, social advancement – and a can-do attitude in the face of adversity.

We should look at immigration as an opportunity – with an eye on economic success, prosperity, human rights, dignity and democracy for all.

Xóchitl Arellano

Communications Deputy, Latino Caucus

Sen. Gilbert Cedillo (D-22)

State Capitol- Rm. 5100

(916) 651-4835 (ofic)

(916) 838-4456 (mb)

Xochitl.arellano@sen.ca.gov